

Josh Baines loved going to the state fair more than anything else in the world. He had saved his allowance for three weeks and now had close to fifteen dollars for spending money at the fair. He asked his parents whether they would allow him to go to the fair with his friends from school. "Not this year, son," replied his father. "I think you should go with the family this year and go with your friends next year when you are in middle school and a little bit bigger. I want you to be able to take care of yourself. There are some rough characters out there."

Josh said, "I understand, Dad," but he was very disappointed inside. What were his friends going to say when they saw him with his mother and father and his baby sister, Rachel? Josh sighed and went over to Gabe's house down the street. Gabe was in his class and he had weird parents, too, and Josh knew Gabe would understand his problem.

"I suggest that you go to the fair with your parents and then ditch them once you get inside the gate," said Gabe. "I don't think they would let me do that because Dad thinks I'm too small to take care of myself. Besides, I don't want them to leave me," replied Josh with a frown. Gabe was no help in solving his dilemma, so Josh ambled home and resigned himself to the fact that he would have to go to the fair with his parents if he wanted to go at all.

That weekend, the Baines family piled into the car and headed for the bright lights of the fair downtown. Rachel, who was two years old, peered with big eyes at the big tents and people getting out of their cars. Josh spied Alison, a girl from his class. She was on a date with a boy who could drive and Josh was very jealous. He was also

embarrassed because Alison saw him getting out of the car with his parents and Rachel.

The Baines family spent three hours and thirty dollars at the fair. Mr. Baines and Josh rode almost every scary ride that they had. Mom and Rachel watched and took pictures with a camera, and then they all ate hot dogs and cotton candy. Josh had a good time and even told Dad that he might go to the fair with his parents again next year!

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